



Speech by

BILL FELDMAN

MEMBER FOR CABOOLTURE

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PROSTITUTION BILL

Mr FELDMAN (Caboolture—ONP) (3.16 p.m.): Whilst I agree in principle with some of what the last speaker said, this is indeed a moral issue. One Nation strongly opposes the legislation before the House as it is clearly evident that the Government's principles underlying the Prostitution Bill 1999 are unworkable and against moral Christian and family values. I remind the House where the initial reaction against this came from. Our laws are Christian and based on Judeo-Christian ethics. I remind the House that 1 Corinthians 6 states—

"The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, 'The two will become one flesh.' Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body."

Mr Welford interjected.

Mr FELDMAN: Take that straight from Scripture and do with it as you will, member for Rockhampton.

Mr Schwarten: I didn't say a word.

Mr FELDMAN: The real war in our country is not for our culture. Culture is simply a casualty. The conflict is much deeper than that. Those who resist biblical principles and morals are really warring against God and the war pits the secular-minded educators, entertainers, Government leaders and media monopolisers against conservative Christians and other groups who uphold godly values. Secularists seem intent on moral degeneracy.

Mr Reeves: Did Fred Nile write that?

Mr FELDMAN: Yes, I admire Mr Nile. I would not mind if he wrote a speech for me, either.

Mr REEVES: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find the words offensive and I ask for them to be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr D'Arcy): The member for Mansfield finds your remarks offensive and asks for them to be withdrawn under Standing Orders. I request you to do so.

Mr FELDMAN: I withdraw the remark that the member for Mansfield would find repugnant that Fred Nile writes my speech.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has been here long enough to know the Standing Orders. He should just withdraw the remarks that have been found offensive and not make any other comment. He can do that in his speech.

Mr FELDMAN: I will withdraw. Secularists seem intent on moral degeneracy. In the name of broad-mindedness they demand rights for pornographers, prostitutes and homosexuals—even advocating legislation that could be interpreted to protect paedophiles—to have freedom to do as they please without bearing the responsibility for their actions. Little do they realise that most things that broaden the mind also narrow the conscience.

One would have to be blind or deaf not to notice that virtually all advertisements use sex to sell. Whether the product is toothpaste, jeans, alcohol or cars, sex is used to grab the viewer's attention or to subliminally imply that the product will lead to greater satisfaction in life. Promiscuity, adultery, prostitution, abortion, sexually transmitted disease and AIDS all testify to our nation's fixation. The national war between the theories of secular humanists and biblically based beliefs involves traditional moral values, more popularly expressed as family values. After this war is won, the victor will determine whether we are released from all moral restraint or whether we are free to live in good conscience according to the Bible as one nation under God.

By calling our new sexual laxity a revolution instead of, say, a moral breakdown, we have given it a progressive halo. We have treated the promiscuous as pioneers of love. We have learned to call the promiscuous "sexually active", obscenity "openness" and abortion "choice". And we have elevated people to a celebrity status for doing things that once would have made them outcasts.

The Government's principle that this legislation will safeguard against corruption and organised crime in the sex industry is fallacious. The sex industry fuels corruption and fuels organised crime. I received a letter from the Presbyterian Church of Queensland, Caboolture Charge, who made some very valid points in their submission on this issue. I have included some of their arguments, which are of benefit to this debate. The first is of great significance. The letter states—

"We are disturbed by the studious use of language designed to launder the offensive nature of prostitution, removing it from the moral realm altogether. The terms 'sex worker', 'sex industry' and 'sexual services' are employed repeatedly, setting the terms for the following discussions. Even when the word 'prostitute' is used, it normally retains the morally neutral connection, for example 'Single workers engaging in prostitution' and 'sex workers operating outside the law' and 'street workers'. Indeed, this trend is reflected even in the questions set in the discussion paper for public response. For instance Question 19: 'Should operators and clients, as well as sex workers, have responsibility for ensuring safe sex practices? Questions 4, 9, 13, 16, 17, 20, 23 use language such as 'providing sexual services', 'sex workers', 'the sex industry' and 'those services'."

The church continues—

"We protest strongly against this hijacking of language. Prostitution is a moral issue and no amount of 'politically correct' adjustment can remove its reprehensible nature. Those who prostitute themselves are male and female harlots. They are not morally neutral 'workers' providing morally neutral 'services' in a 'sex industry' analogous to the morally neutral terms 'wool industry', 'wheat industry' or 'primary industry'."

The letter continues—

"Would we tolerate a similar politicising of language so that thieves were called 'property transfer workers' in the 'assets exchange industry'?"

Would we be better calling liars and perjurers 'workers in the information adjustment industry', providing 'fact minimisation services'?

Are murderers really 'workers in the death industry' entrepreneurs who supply the public with the 'extermination services' analogous with pest controllers?

Of course not, yet this disgraceful agenda is precisely the one before us in relation to prostitution. We simply plead for the use of honest language.

The sale of sex is a defiling and degrading of God's gracious blessing intended for man's honour and comfort. It is an open insult to the sanctity of marriage and to God and the beauty of love and the act of love between two (2) consenting persons, male and female, committed to each other through marriage.

It is fundamentally irrational to be designing laws to protect people in their pursuit of immoral acts. Laws are meant to protect citizens (including immoral ones) as they go about legitimate activities."

The Presbyterian Church went on to say that—

Mr SCHWARTEN: I rise to a point of order. I have been listening to the honourable member's contribution. He wrongfully, at the outset, acknowledged an interjection that was supposed to have come from me. I do not want my name associated with anything that he says. I find it offensive and ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr D'Arcy): Order! I was aware of that particular comment by the member for Caboolture. I also was cognisant of what was going on from the chair. The member for Caboolture can take my assurance that the interjection did not come from the member for

Rockhampton. He is a little bit late in getting his point across, but the member can take my assurance that he referred to the wrong member. Could he just withdraw?

Mr FELDMAN: I withdraw and apologise if there was any hurt caused to the member for Rockhampton. The letter from the Presbyterian Church continues—

"Indeed, we insist that the law should provide all normal protections for them as for other citizens. Further, the law must act if illegal things are done to prostitutes even while they too are committing illegal acts.

However, the provision of special laws to assist immoral people to carry out their immorality with impunity is an entirely different matter! It would be absurd for the law to provide special safeguards for thieves, liars, and killers, creating a special 'industry safety net' so they can go about their ... business in a safer 'working environment'. Yet precisely that fallacy is inherent in the arguments for relaxing prostitution laws."

Some may argue that there are some worthy aspects of the Bill, such as those that seek to assist prostitutes who wish to escape from the industry, and measures to give police greater powers to deal with illegal prostitution. The valid argument is: why are prostitutes not being helped to escape the industry now? Why are greater police powers not implemented now? It is an insult to observe that this Government believes that it is necessary to further legalise prostitution in order to apply these provisions.

I have read numerous articles in relation to the impact that prostitution has on society and, in particular, the impact it has on those within the industry—the "working girls" themselves. There are significant links between prostitution and homelessness, unemployment, drug use, dysfunctional families and histories of abusive families. A finding of the End Child Prostitution, Pornography and Trafficking inquiry—ECPAT—reported that children as young as 10 were engaging in commercial sex activities, and 3,700 young people under 18 were confirmed to be, or were believed to be, selling sex for their livelihood.

The problem is not limited to the major cities but is spread across rural and regional centres throughout the nation. Young people are mainly exchanging sex for accommodation, food, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, clothes and money. These young people make easy targets for prostitution and readily fall into the wrong hands, seduced by all the wonderful trimmings. Next thing they know, they are trapped, usually as a result of their newly formed drug addiction. More than half come into the industry clean, and within three months they are addicts.

Members of this House may be aware of the following excerpts obtained from an interview with Linda, a former prostitute and madam who operated in Perth over the past 20 years. I will table this document for the information of the House. Linda said—

"When you first start and become a call girl it is all wonderful—the honeymoon time—the money is great—nothing is sore. But within two months of doing four or five or even up to ten men a day, six days a week, you start to hurt. Their bodies hurt, their arms hurt, their legs hurt, their private parts hurt because they have worked it. The pain is horrific. It's like a wound. You are wounded. When you wake up, you ask any working girl and she will tell you about the wounds of getting up in the morning when you can't walk—your back aches. Not many like to tell you the truth. You have the physical part that makes these girls turn to alcohol"—

and drugs to get through the job. Linda continued—

"The drugs cause them to no longer hurt. But then they start to hurt because they get the depression in, and they no longer know who they are."

I have heard of deaths, suicides, jumping off buildings, doing different things, hitting trees with cars, overdosing.

They are not the same person. I have seen eighteen year old girls—by the time they are nineteen—they are nothing but a spinned out washing machine. Not the same girls.

The girls that are on drugs—they can do it without a condom. If they get paid extra, they will do anything. There was an AIDS girl, I heard just recently, working in a parlour.

Brothels are a great way to shield drug dealers because they pose as clients and they are there for one purpose, to traffic their drugs without fear of prosecution, because no one disturbs them."

She went on to say—

"Out of a hundred, you would say that about 13 to 17 girls weren't on drugs."

And what does Linda think about the Government's plan to legalise prostitution? She says—

"It should not be legalised. We know you are never going to stamp this out— but the police and politicians should attempt to reduce it. Legalising prostitution would be devastating for children coming up. Many girls would be tempted to enter prostitution."

So there we have it, from someone who really knows.

Instead of attempting to reduce prostitution, this jobs, jobs, jobs Labor Government is encouraging the very opposite, almost making prostitution an attractive employment prospect for our homeless youth and our school leavers. As I mentioned earlier, this Government should be helping prostitutes escape the industry now, not further liberalising the prostitution laws to entrap more girls and men and boys into the devastating world of sex, drugs and crime. A humane society should do everything it can to rescue them from their unhappy state. Removing the laws against prostitution will only increase the problem. In effect, the Government is saying, "It's fine by us if you come from an abusive or traumatic background. It's fine by us if you want to degrade yourself and be a prostitute. We won't set the law against you. We will help you further down that track."

We agree that prostitution has been around a long time and that the law will never eradicate it. But the same principle is true of every evil. There will always be thieves, there will always be liars and there will always be frauds, but we do not then relax the laws in their favour. We agree that the Police Service will not be able to use its limited resources to contain prostitution without neglecting other social problems so that priorities will be determined from time to time. But it does not follow that the law should then sanction what is inherently wrong simply because the law cannot be as effective as desired. We have just seen speed limits in built-up areas reduced to 50 km/h. This was, in fact, to trap more people who go over the limit and make our streets safer and more secure.

We are more severe on our drivers than we are on prostitution. There should be no change in the direction of relaxing the current laws; rather, the current legal status of single operators should end. Prostitution should be illegal in any form, but we know that we can never stamp it out. Those people will always work in that industry. We will never stamp out drug addiction; we will never stamp out prostitution.

The "continuing demand for some prostitution services" will continue. The demand for this vile, degrading action will always continue while there is a client. There is still a continuing demand for stolen goods, for mercenaries, for hijacked computer software and a thousand other evils. It is a twisted reasoning that sees demand justify supply.

What about the theory that sanctions against prostitutes create a cycle whereby they must continue to prostitute themselves in order to pay their fines? That theory suggests that a decent law is the perpetrator of the very crime it condemns! It is not the law but the perverse reaction to the law that is at fault.

If a truck driver is fined for speeding and he continues speeding in order to meet his delivery schedules so he can earn money to pay his fines, he is showing the same contempt for the law and the general public. Inability to pay fines is not a reason for committing the same offences which will accumulate more fines.

The argument that prostitution is a "legitimate business activity" between the prostitute and client is preposterous. What decent parent truly believes that his or her child has taken up a legitimate career path in turning to prostitution? Will our school career advisers and guidance officers be encouraging some school leavers into this legitimate business activity? How would honourable members feel about a career counsellor if this was the advice that was given to their children?

The same applies to prostitutes being merely referred to as "participants in the sex industry". What of the licensing system's aim at satisfying the authority that the applicant is a suitable person? This involves looking at the character of the person and, at least in Victoria, that person's ability to run a business, obtain finance and look after the safety and welfare of workers.

It is certainly tragic that these laws effectively declare particular prostitutes and brothel owners as "suitable persons" of good character. Indeed, they are especially commendable if they can make "the business" run at a profit, or even obtain corporate finance to expand and improve the sordid trade. I can just see this Government going down and re-chiselling the headstone of Hector Hapeta and adding the words, "Here lies a decent, good, clean, honest, law-abiding businessman—an entrepreneur ahead of his time." That is what this legislation does. Words have lost all meaning when those who run brothels and are living off the earnings of degradation are said to "look after the safety and welfare of workers". Prostitution is, by definition, against the safety and welfare of everyone.

Prostitutes enter their life of prostitution knowing the inherent risks. They know of the drug addiction, assault, rape, murder and sexual diseases of every variety. Some of these people are heading to a vile and painful early death. We must also consider mental health problems, unwanted pregnancies and the higher rate of suicide. These are all documented, but some people still choose to enter that life. No-one can stop them. They are more interested in the easy money outside the taxman's grasp and the payment for illegal drugs. I say that, surely, the risks should deter even more people from entering this life, but not this jobs, jobs, jobs Government. This Government does not care how many Queensland sons and daughters it sends down the road of an early death. The drugs, the mental health problems and disease will kill more prostitutes than will a rapist or a murderer. That is

what this Bill is doing. This Bill is sending more people down that path because these are the things that proliferate within the brothels. We cannot get away from it.

Mr Reynolds interjected.

Mr FELDMAN: We now have not just hepatitis A, B, C, D, E, F and G, but we have H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5. We do not like to use the word "AIDS", do we, member for Townsville? No, we just add more letters and more numbers to call hepatitis by different names because we are scared of the words "AIDS". That is what this leads to.

Those men and those women who work on the street and who carry those diseases because they are involved in drug activities will never obtain a job in a boutique brothel. This will not happen in the new industry which this Government is creating. These people will still be working outside the law to gain the little extra money that is necessary to support their drug habits or whatever other habits they might have. They are out to get that bit of extra money in an endeavour to avoid the taxman. They will not be working in this Government's boutique brothels. They will still be active. The only ones who will work in the Government's boutique brothels are people who probably do not even work in them now. This legislation is just going to entice more people down that path. It is not a path down which we want to go.

It is clear that the passage of this Bill is not in the best interests of our society. It will not achieve anything, it will not strengthen the family unit, it will not make our streets safer and more secure and it will not create a happy, harmonious society which requires a strong, functional family unit. What this country requires is strong, moral, upstanding Governments which will resist the evil diatribe which is contained in this Bill. This Bill is simply diatribe and the Government is wrapping it up in some cosy little coating. It just does not wash. It does not wash with the people from the Australian Christian Coalition. That organisation has already written to the member for Townsville. This legislation does not wash with every other moral, decent, upstanding person in our society.

One Nation does not support indecent acts of prostitution, or the further destruction that this legislation will cause to our already damaged society. One Nation will definitely be saying no to any further liberalisation of prostitution—and quite proudly so. This Government's Bill is going to be responsible for more deaths and more disease. This Government is sending more sons and daughters of Queenslanders down a path which will lead to a more violent death than anyone would ever have imagined. This Bill will not clean up the streets. It will not clean up the activity which is occurring in Brunswick Street right at this moment. That activity will continue despite what this Government does. All this Government is doing is creating a whole new industry.

Time expired.
